

REC- 65

February 1, 1960

Mr. John L. ~~Goldwater~~
President
Comics Magazine Association
of America, Inc.
300 Fourth Avenue
New York 10, New York

Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of January 25, 1960, with enclosure.

With regard to my reference to "'comic' books" in my statement to all law enforcement officials in the January, 1960, issue of the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, I believe that you as a member of the legitimate comics industry should be well aware of the type of low and obscene literature to which I was referring. Undoubtedly, you are familiar with the many "under-the-counter" comic books which illicitly trade on established comic characters and depict them in various vulgar and obscene activities. The unscrupulous individuals who profit from this degrading activity should be ferreted out and made to pay for the tremendous harm which results particularly among our young people.

It was my belief that the attention of the American people needed to be focused upon the upsurge in the volume of salacious magazines and other pornographic items which are available to our boys and girls. I did not infer that any reputable magazines were involved.

I specifically indicated in the statement to which you take such vigorous objection, that obscene literature is spread through the means of "films, decks of playing cards, photographs, 'comic' books, salacious magazines, paperbacked books and other pornographic products." Certainly no reasonable person could interpret this as meaning all films, all decks of playing cards, all photographs or all "comic" books. In the sentence to which you take exception, quotation marks were used around the word "comic" to specifically convey the idea that legitimate books were not being criticized.

1 - Mr. DeLoach

DWB:rwz/sfc (6)

Tolson _____
Mohr _____
Parsons _____
Belmont _____
Callahan _____
DeLoach _____
Malone _____
McGuire _____
Rosen _____
Tamm _____
Trotter _____
W.C. Sullivan _____
Tele. Room _____
Ingram _____
Gandy _____

MAIL ROOM ☐

TELETYPE UNIT ☐

Mr. John L. Goldwater

You might like to know that although I have received a number of comments and letters concerning my statement, yours has been the only one misinterpreting it.

Very truly yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

COMICS MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.

NEW YORK, N. Y.

January 25, 1960

300 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

JOHN L. GOLDWATER
PRESIDENT
JACK S. LIEBOWITZ
VICE-PRESIDENT
MARTIN GOODMAN
SECRETARY
LEON HARVEY
TREASURER

Mr. Tolson
Mr. Mohr
Mr. Parsons
Mr. Belmont
Mr. Callahan
Mr. DeLoach
Mr. Malone
Mr. McGuire
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tamm
Mr. Trotter
Mr. W.C. Sullivan
Tele. Room
Mr. Ingram
Miss Gandy

Hon. J. Edgar Hoover, Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

Our attention has been called to your statement linking comic books with pornography, which has been reprinted in newspapers throughout the country during the past month. We respectfully, but most strenuously, wish to protest such unjustifiable characterization, for there is absolutely no existing basis for it. Its publication, over the name of someone of your stature and public esteem, constitutes a serious liability to an industry which has demonstrated its responsibility to a remarkable degree on practically a unanimous basis for more than five years. The comic books sold on the newsstands today are not, in any sense, pornographic or obscene; they are, on the contrary, decent and in good taste. While it is possible that your statement was not intended to include the comic books sold on newsstands; nevertheless, the average reader could assume that it did, for the statement did not distinguish the legitimate product of our industry from the type of material produced in cartoon-form to be sold illicitly as pornography.

In October 1954, 90% of the publishers, distributors, printers and engravers of all comic books published in the United States adopted a code--the most stringent in existence for any communications media--and established an agency, the Comics Code Authority, to enforce it. The code remains unaltered in every one of its tenets, is observed by all but two publishers in the industry (these are ethical publishers but chose not to join the program at the outset), and is enforced by means of advance review of all material intended for publication by the code administrator and her staff.

We are enclosing our booklet, "Facts About Code-Approved Comics Magazines", which contains the complete text of the code, a description of how the Code Authority functions, and references to some of the agencies and individuals who have commented upon the results of this industry self-regulation program.

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CR/REC

ENCLOSURE

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1/25/60

You will note that many of the most respected organizations in the country have adopted resolutions or made statements to the effect that the Code has brought decency and good taste to the comic books available to our children on the newsstands today. For example, the National Organization for Decent Literature, an agency of the Catholic Church, has not placed a single comic book on its list of "Objectionable Magazines" for a period of more than four years. On the contrary, it currently lists more than 150 comic titles as "Acceptable". The director of the NODL, Msgr. Thomas J. Fitzgerald, who perhaps more than any other person in the United States scrutinizes the output of all publishing media in this country and is most vigilant in condemning what he considers obscene, has stated categorically on a number of occasions, in print and on the public platform, that the "Comics Code Authority has definitely cleaned up the comic magazine field," and has done a "wonderful" job.

Senator Kefauver, whose committee studied the problem in 1954, has since stated that the self-regulation program of the industry has cleaned up the comics field. The Rhode Island Commission on Youth, which has distributed thousands of our brochures, the "Fitzpatrick" committee of the New York State Legislature, are just two of a number of additional examples. Among private agencies, resolutions of support have been adopted by the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs, and in 1957 our association won the Grand Award, sponsored by the American Society of Association Executives, "For having rendered outstanding service to the industry which it represents as well as to the American Public." The awards jury was headed by then Secretary of Commerce, Sinclair Weeks, and the other members were: John S. Coleman, president, Chamber of Commerce of the United States; John A. Dotson, Dean, College of Education, University of Georgia; The Very Rev. Paul C. Reinert, J. C., President, St. Louis University; and Ernest G. Swigert, President, National Association of Manufacturers.

The gravity of the publication of statements such as yours to the continuing success of this program must be gauged by the fact that it is voluntary in nature, depending entirely upon the financial as well as principled support of the members of the industry. These in turn must feel that the public, especially as represented by its respected leaders, recognize, or at least, acknowledge, their adherence to a standard of ethics.

Hon. J. Edgar Hoover

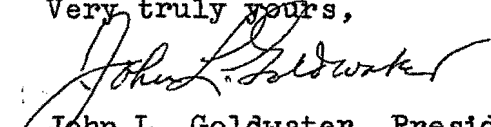
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1/25/60

Perhaps you will be interested to know that almost two-thirds of the publishers of comics magazines in business at the time the code was adopted have gone out of the field. There were some thirty publishers actively engaged in producing comic books in the Fall of 1954. Today, there are only eleven! A concomitant reduction in the percentage of distributors and printers of comics has also resulted. Nevertheless, those remaining in the industry have steadfastly adhered to the program, supporting it financially, submitting their material for advance review, making the revisions required, and facing up to the competition of other communications media which do not have anything like the restrictions to which Code-Approved comics are subjected.

We sincerely hope that you will make your own examination of the comic books found on the newsstands. We respectfully submit that our industry is entitled to receive an objective analysis by you, and that you will find, as we are certain you will, that we are justified in receiving a commendatory statement from you, rather than one of condemnation.

Very truly yours,


John L. Goldwater, President

JLG:mw
Encl.



United States Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington 25, D. C.

January 1, 1960

TO ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS:

The morals of America are besieged today by an unprincipled force which will spare no home or community in its quest for illicit profits.

I am speaking of the unquestionably base individuals who spread obscene literature across our land through the means of films, decks of playing cards, photographs, "comic" books, salacious magazines, paperbacked books and other pornographic products. These forms of obscenity indeed threaten the morality of our Nation and its richest treasure--our young people.

While our schools, churches and youth organizations conscientiously strive to improve the morals and thinking of our juvenile citizens, forces of evil are working on the other side of the fence to contaminate all that we hold decent. The most disgusting part of this assault is that our youth is subjected to lurid exhibitions of obscenity in many of the places where they seek clean entertainment.

Despite the splendid public service rendered daily by the overwhelming majority of advertising and entertainment executives, a small group of opportunists in these industries are degrading America and its youth. Our young people are literally bombarded with vulgar motion picture advertisements in some newspapers; certain movies have too often made good on the provocative promises in the advertisements; and profanity and rapacity are the main ingredients of more and more screen offerings. A few television producers, too, sometimes break through the veil of decency as if some of them were trying to see just how much the public will stand. Recently, we have seen considerable publicity concerning certain elements in this medium who have sacrificed scruples on the altar of monetary gain.

It is also a grievous fact that drugstores and "sweetshops," pleasant meeting places for past generations, now display publications which a few years ago would have a place in only the bawdiest of gathering places. These signs of moral decay, tolerated by adults, cannot help but debase the thinking of our impressionable teen-agers. Yet, while they are impressionable, American youths are remarkably wise in recognizing pseudo-piety in adults and the sham of a society which condones declining morality.

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(Reprinted from January, 1960, FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin)

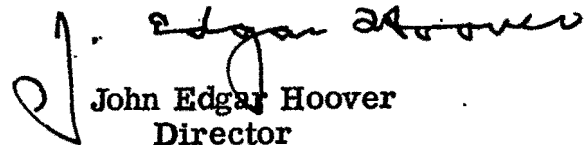
ENCLOSURE

In 1957 there were nearly eight forcible rapes per 100,000 inhabitants in the United States. In 1958 this figure increased ten and one-half percent, a forcible rape occurring every 36 minutes! This truly shocking and shameful state of affairs is made even more deplorable by the knowledge that sex crimes and obscene and vulgar literature often go hand in hand.

The time for half-hearted, oblique action against dealers in depravity is past. Although their despicable trade reaps \$500 million a year, this diabolical business is costing the Nation much more than money. It is robbing our country and particularly our younger generation of decency--it is a seedbed for delinquency among juveniles and depravity among all ages. If we are to survive morally, Americans must search within themselves for the answers to these questions: Have local governing authorities investigated to ensure that laws against smut salesmen in their communities are strong enough? Is the public outcry of sufficient strength to impress local judges with the need of defending morality by sentencing filth purveyors to maximum terms? Are community and civic groups cooperating with law enforcement authorities in fighting this debasing blight?

And--above all--are good citizens teaching their youngsters habits and beliefs which will be as armor against the tainted temptations of muck merchants?

Very truly yours,


John Edgar Hoover
Director

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. DeLoach

DATE: January 28, 1960

FROM : M. A. Jones

SUBJECT: JOHN L. GOLDWATER
PRESIDENT, COMICS MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA, INC.
PROTEST RE DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION IN
JANUARY, 1960, LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN

Tolson ✓
 Mohr ✓
 Parsons ✓
 Belmont ✓
 Callahan ✓
 DeLoach ✓
 Malone ✓
 McGuire ✓
 Rosen ✓
 Tamm ✓
 Trotter ✓
 W.C. Sullivan ✓
 Tele. Room ✓
 Ingram ✓
 Gandy ✓

We have received a letter dated January 25, 1960, from captioned individual in which he makes reference to the January 1, 1960, Law Enforcement Bulletin Introduction particularly with respect to linking comic books with pornography. He protests "such unjustifiable characterization," and declares there "is absolutely no existing basis for it." He enclosed a booklet regarding the "Code-Approved Comics Magazines" and set forth considerable information relative to the fact that the comics book industry is being conducted in the highest possible manner.

There is no basis for his criticism since there was no intention of connecting legitimate comic magazines with obscenity. The second paragraph of the Introduction stated that obscene literature is spread through the means of "films, decks of playing cards, photographs, 'comic' books, salacious magazines, paperbacked books and other pornographic products." Certainly this should not be interpreted as meaning that all decks of playing cards, all photographs, paperbacked books or "comic" books are means of distributing obscene material. The quotation marks were used specifically around the word comic in the Introduction to convey the idea that legitimate comic books were not being criticized.

Mr. Goldwater, of all people, should be thoroughly familiar with the type of "under-the-counter" comic books which illicitly trade on established comic strip characters, portraying them in various forms of lewd and obscene activities. There have been many such comic books using famous characters like Blondie and Dagwood, Li'l Abner, Moon Mullins and many others. (See addendum on page 2)

You will recall that we cooperated last year with the Dell Publishing Company, Inc., of New York in the issuance of a comic book entitled "The FBI Story," which pertains to the movie. This was distributed in September, 1959.

EX-137 REC-65 62-1057-5-2
 Bufiles reflect no derogatory information identifiable with John L. Goldwater, who in 1943 was associated with Radio Comics, Inc., and there is no derogatory information identifiable with Comics Magazine Association of America, Inc.
 Enclosure sent 2-1-60

DWB:rwz 1 - Mr. DeLoach

(5)

(Continued on next page with recommendation)

58 FEB 1 1960

FEB 5 1960

M. A. Jones to Mr. DeLoach memorandum

We have had cordial correspondence in the past with Charles F. Murphy, who at one time was the administrator of the Code Authority for comics magazines. Murphy in 1959 was an attorney in New York.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the attached letter be sent to Mr. John L. Goldwater.

Handwritten: JH 1/28

Handwritten: D.130

Handwritten: ✓

Handwritten: I had a rewrite of it.

Handwritten: K

ADDENDUM DWB:rwz 1/28/60. Attached in an obscene envelope are samples of the comic books. These are from the Laboratory's reference file and should be returned so that they may be placed back in the file. The obscenity of this type material, currently referred to as hard-core pornography, has been thoroughly established by court action in the past.

Handwritten: returned to lab

Handwritten: ✓

Handwritten: D.130